

April 9, 2013 PC Agenda - Item #5

April 7, 2013

RE: NPA-2012-0023.01 - PromiseLand

Dear Planning Commissioners:

As Chair of the City of Austin's Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission, I am unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting of April 9, 2013, as both meetings are scheduled at the same time. However, I did want to weigh-in on the above referenced case.

I am the only current member of the Windsor Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (WPNPCT) that was involved through the entire process of creating our neighborhood plan, and feel I have some history worth sharing. Feeling the adjacent Mueller redevelopment made the existing, small lot, single-family homes as inappropriate along this stretch of 51st Street, we recommended GR zoning with the Mixed-Use overlay where we could. However, the very large PromiseLand tract had far more intensive redevelopment potential, so it was recommended for LO without the MU, so that public hearings would be held for uses requiring rezoning. (PromiseLand has not indicated any rezoning is in the works for anticipated development.)

As Windsor Park's plan was wrapping up, the Vertical Mixed Use opt in/opt out process was being implemented citywide. Windsor Park then struggled with both processes, as objections arose near the end of the planning process. The Plan was adopted in August 2007, and in May 2008, the City approved VMU for all the parcels fronting on E. 51st Street between Cameron Road and Berkman Drive, per vote of the neighborhood, including the PromiseLand parcels.

The WPNP was published with the FLUM showing virtually all the neighborhood's church properties, including PromiseLand's, as CIVIC. I am now told that current neighborhood planning policy is to designate any VMU properties with the MIXED-USE overlay in the FLUM, as PromiseLand is now seeking. Though the WPNPCT voted against the FLUM amendment in this case, I have a strong feeling that the Planning Commission and City Council will approve it.

I do want to note that the WPNP calls for more intense, but **pedestrian friendly** development on 51st, and cite page 43 of the WPNP: "In addition to the community's desire for increased commercial development along 51st Street, they also want the neighborhoods north of 51st Street to remain buffered from the anticipated additional traffic and more intense land uses along 51st Street..."

The Plan's pedestrian-friendly concept for 51st Street development has already been eroded with the 2011 removal of the restriction on drive-through uses for six (6!) lots in the 1200 block of E. 51st for the IBC bank drive-through. A compatibility setback waiver was also subsequently granted to them last year. We were heavily relying on compatibility standards to provide the buffering called for in the plan.

So, in order to assure some degree of future buffering, the Contact Team also voted in this PromiseLand case for the creek drainage easement along the northern edge, backing up to single-family homes, to be designated as OPEN SPACE. A portion of the creek further to the west has that designation. The easement was chosen over the flood plain as a more constant and identifiable tract of land. We will defer to the City's staff to make a final determination, but our suggested area (a best-guess estimate) is shown on the attached map. Please make this a part of the FLUM amendment.

I am submitting this as an individual and not on behalf of or at the direction of the Windsor Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team. Let me know if you have any questions.

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Windsor Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team
Alternate Concept for the Proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment for Promiseland/1504 E. 51st Street
February 14, 2013

